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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 MAPUTO 001083

SIPDIS

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TAGS: PREL PGOV MZ

SUBJECT: FRELIIMO WILL CONSOLIDATE VIRTUAL ONE PARTY RULE IN MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS

REF: A. MAPUTO 901  
¶B. MAPUTO 846  
¶C. MAPUTO 791  
¶D. MAPUTO 714  
¶E. MAPUTO 919

Classified By: Pol/Econ Chief Matt Roth for reasons 1.5 (b) and (d)

¶1. (C) SUMMARY: The November 19 municipal elections in 43 cities and towns across Mozambique are shaping up to be a referendum confirming one party rule. The already dominant ruling FRELIIMO party is making every effort to consolidate its power outside the capital in an effort to better control the municipal electoral landscape. The electoral campaign officially began on November 4 with the majority of senior Executive branch members immediately headed for up country election sites, allegedly doing government work but, in reality, using government funds on the campaign trail. This combined with an unwritten requirement that employees of the Government of Mozambique (GRM) show allegiance to FRELIIMO, the requirement that all FRELIIMO members vote, and Guebuza's ingenious local initiative fund, may mean that FRELIIMO could expand its dominance. END SUMMARY.

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WORK FOR THE STATE, VOTE FRELIIMO  
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¶2. (C) A variety of sources have told us that advancement, and even employment, in government jobs requires proof of allegiance to FRELIIMO, often described as a "golden rule" of government service. Some members of the Ministry of Health have told our sources that they are required to produce a FRELIIMO party card in order to receive pay raises and promotions. This is apparently commonplace in the Ministries, schools, and hospitals run by the State. In a country of roughly 20 million, with only 400,000 employed in the formal sector, and some 125,000 of those employed by the GRM, the country's largest employer, this unwritten requirement of party allegiance goes a long way towards securing a voter base among the working population. The link between FRELIIMO and government employment also means that most citizens do not see a great difference between FRELIIMO and the GRM.

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COMPULSORY VOTING IN THE FRELIIMO PARTY  
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¶3. (C) FRELIIMO's 2 million-strong membership has been informed for the first time ever that the Party is requiring all its members to vote in the November 19 elections. Party officials reportedly will check to make sure that members have the ink-stained fingers proving each card-carrying member will have voted. This combined with the unwritten "golden rule" that GRM employees show allegiance to the party, means that voter turnout among party members, but also

GRM officials, and a large percentage of the formally employed, will be particularly strong for the FRELIMO party on Election Day. The requirement to vote is also illustrative of FRELIMO's control over its membership and government employees, with the not-so-subtle emphasis on voting along party lines, suggests a different understanding of basic democratic principals.

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7 MILLION WAYS TO BUILD A BASE  
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¶4. (C) The President's local initiative fund, which provides a minimum of 7 million meticais (\$291,670) for district rural development projects (Ref C), is another way that FRELIMO is using state funds, of which more than half come from direct donor support, to guarantee electoral dominance. The local initiative funds are managed by district administrators, all of whom are FRELIMO members. RENAMO spokeswoman Ivone Soares noted recently to PolOff that she is unaware of a single RENAMO member who has benefited from financial support through the local initiative fund. This fund, according to news reports and our sources, has gone a long way towards strengthening the hand of FRELIMO in rural areas, and continues to obscure the distinction between the State and FRELIMO, because of the direct association between the Party and the GRM's rural development plan. If FRELIMO makes strong inroads in rural areas previously dominated by RENAMO, it will be thanks, in part, to Guebuza's local initiative fund.

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GRM FUNDS FRELIMO CAMPAIGNS  
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¶5. (C) From November 4 onwards, few of our GRM interlocutors, from the ministerial to working level, are available in Maputo. Nearly all are in the districts, campaigning for FRELIMO. Already the Prime Minister and Interior Minister were visiting key constituencies on the first day of campaigns, ostensibly on GRM business. Opposition members allege that with 56 percent of the annual budget funded directly from the G19 donor group, GRM officials are using State resources to fund airfares, buses, vehicles, helicopters, and even campaign rallies in the run-up to the November 19 municipal elections. At the same time, RENAMO and other small opposition parties continue to struggle with funding compared to FRELIMO's nearly infinite war chest. Needless to say, very little action will be taken by the GRM until after November 19, particularly with the senior tranches of each Ministry absent from their desks.

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COMMENT: ONE PARTY RULE LIKELY TO GROW STRONGER  
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¶6. (C) While recent dissension within the ranks of RENAMO about opposition party leader Alfonso Dhlakama's decision to oust the popular mayor of Beira (Ref A) has given the impression of an opposition party in crisis and FRELIMO's decision to remove it's popular Maputo mayor (Ref B) generated dissension in the ranks at a time when voters seem to demand more accountability from local politicians (Ref E), it is more likely the strategic planning and use of State funds by FRELIMO to secure an ever-stronger voter base which will result in a landslide victory for the ruling party, and a confirmation of absolute control within Mozambique. This would be a continuation of a worrying trend in sub-Saharan Africa of dominant one-party or virtual one-party systems which have very few checks and balances; environments which often allow corruption to flourish. Weakness in opposition politics is a concern that has been raised in several democracy and governance forums in recent months in Maputo. Among the potential solutions which some donors have argued

for is the creation of a common fund to support opposition party campaigns in an effort to offset FRELIMO's use of State funds. While the November 19 municipal elections represent a practice run for next year's national elections, they should also provide an indicator of main opposition party RENAMO's ailing health. The municipal election results will most likely see RENAMO lose control in several of its remaining 5 municipal seats, including the historical stronghold of Beira (Ref A).

Chapman